

RANCHO SANTA FE
Rancho Santa Fe
San Diego
California

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

RANCHO SANTA FE

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Location: Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego County, California.

Significance: In the 1920s, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, a subsidiary of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, developed Rancho Santa Fe as a community of "gentlemen's ranches" in the hills north of San Diego. Winding roads joining small farms contrast with the formal, axial commercial core. Here architect Lilian Rice designed buildings in the Spanish Revival style, a style that became standard for buildings in the community. Rancho Santa Fe's unified architectural design, creative landscape plan, and origin as a design-controlled community contribute to its important role in the history of community development.

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INTRODUCTION

Rancho Santa Fe, in northwestern San Diego County, California, is a planned community of some 4,200 persons, bounded by the neighboring towns of Encinitas, Escondido, Del Mar, and Solana Beach. In 1991, it boasts one of the highest per capita incomes in the country. Rancho Santa Fe is an unincorporated community, governed by the Rancho Santa Fe Association, which, under the auspices of the Rancho Santa Fe Protective Covenant, administers zoning and land use regulations, and maintains the architectural and rural character of the area encompassed by the covenant, which covers approximately 6,200 acres.

The history of Rancho Santa Fe illuminates both the architectural and historical transitions the village has made, from a small, planned, architecturally homogeneous community of "gentlemen's ranches" and estates, to that of a prosperous, exclusive "bedroom" suburb, perhaps the exemplary California "ranch" community.

BEGINNINGS

The planned community of Rancho Santa Fe developed within the former boundaries of a land grant of 8,824.71 acres deeded between 1832 and 1845 to Juan Maria Osuna, first *alcalde* (mayor) of San Diego, by the Mexican government. This grant was later confirmed by the United States government in 1871. Called Rancho San Dieguito after the nearby river, the land was used by the Osuna family to raise cattle and sheep for their hides and tallow, and some farming.¹ Two adobe structures were erected in the rancho, near the path of the river, to house the Osuna family.² Based on the rapid rate at which Osuna's heirs sold off the property after his death in 1851, it is unlikely that the rancho was ever financially rewarding. By 1906, when the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, a subsidiary of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, became interested in Rancho San Dieguito, title to the land was held by several non-Osuna owners. On October 22 of that year, the Land Improvement Company paid \$100,000 to George N. Gilbert and James E. and Marie L. Connell for land comprising all but 374 acres of the original Rancho San Dieguito.³

The Santa Fe intended to use the land to plant eucalyptus trees, inspired, it is said, by Gifford Pinchot, head of the U.S. Forest Service, who initiated President Theodore Roosevelt's reforestation program.⁴ Worried that the supply of domestic timber would diminish, the Santa

¹ Roxana L. Phillips, "Two Osuna Adobes: Results of Research on Chronology and Ownership" (Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society, 1987).

² Both the dates and occupants for these structures remain vague. It is not known which adobe was occupied by Juan Osuna, and which by his son, Leandro. For more information see Phillips. Both adobes are extant in 1991, although one has been severely modified.

³ San Diego County Records Office. Deed Book 399, page 49, October 22, 1906.

⁴ Col. Ed Fletcher, Memories of Ed Fletcher (San Diego: Pioneer Printers, 1952), 211. See also "Rancho Santa Fe - A Study in Gracious California Living," Union Title-Trust Topics 3 (January-February 1949): 2.

Fe began an experimental program that would cultivate eucalyptus in order to use its wood for railroad ties. Eucalyptus ties had been used with some success in Australia, so E. O. Faulkner, of the Santa Fe's Tie and Timber Department, was sent to that country in September 1907 "for the purpose of studying the various species of eucalyptus with a view of selecting such varieties as may be adopted to the climatic conditions of Southern California."⁵ Eucalyptus seedlings were then imported from Australia, and planted on more than 3,000 acres of Rancho San Dieguito. Irrigation was supplied from the San Dieguito River or from individual wells. Two hundred twenty-five acres of walnut trees were also planted. Despite the great expense incurred by the Santa Fe, the project foundered. Rainfall was minimal and a severe frost in January 1913 did much damage. Further, the timber shortage did not materialize; the increased use of concrete and steel reduced the need for domestic reforestation. Most importantly, eucalyptus wood proved difficult and expensive to fashion into railroad ties. Redwood timber, dipped in creosote, demonstrated a greater durability than eucalyptus, at far less cost. In 1915, the project was abandoned, and the eucalyptus trees were left to grow unhampered on the land.⁶

Rancho San Dieguito was then leased to Col. Ed Fletcher, a San Diego land and water developer. Several roads were laid through the Rancho, and a pumping plant was built; with the additional water, tenants raised cattle, grain, beets, and other vegetables.⁷ The success of these crops demonstrated to Santa Fe officials the possibilities of the Rancho San Dieguito land, if it could be sufficiently irrigated. Thus they accepted when Fletcher proposed, in 1916, that the Santa Fe sponsor a dam to be built several miles east at Carroll Reservoir, the rights to which were owned by William G. Henshaw, a Fletcher client. The dam would supply water throughout north San Diego County, including Rancho San Dieguito. Hodges Dam, its main reservoir, and several subsidiary distributing dams and reservoirs were erected under the management of the San Dieguito Mutual Water Company, another subsidiary of the Santa Fe, comprised of Fletcher, Henshaw, and three Santa Fe officials, including W. E. Hodges, vice-president of the Railway and president of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. (The dam and reservoir were renamed in his honor.) Completed in 1918, at a cost of almost \$2 million, the multiple-arch dam was 700 feet long and 157 feet high, capable of impounding 37,700 acre-feet of water.⁸

The dam construction was funded by the Santa Fe because only the guarantee of sufficient irrigation would allow them to establish some kind of organized development on their land, in order to ensure that they would recoup at least part of their initial investment. It seems probable that the Santa Fe would have desired a primarily horticultural development. The boom in California citrus fruits meant increased tonnage for the railroads when the fruits were shipped back east; a development of citrus groves in Rancho San Dieguito would guarantee the Santa Fe profits from both the sale of the land and from the transport of its product. Whatever the

⁵ San Diego Union, September 16, 1907. Clipping on file, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

⁶ "Memorandum on Rancho Santa Fe," Office of the Valuation Engineer System, October 1952: 2-3. Copy on file, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

⁷ Fletcher, 214-215.

⁸ "Memorandum on Rancho Santa Fe," 3-4.

specific intentions of the Santa Fe and the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, some kind of action was planned, because in 1920 L. G. Sinnard, a "lands expert" from San Francisco, was hired to report on the possibilities of subdividing Rancho San Dieguito.⁹

RAILROAD LAND DEVELOPMENT, SINNARD, AND THE SANTA FE LAND IMPROVEMENT CO.

This is a project of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, a subsidiary of the Santa Fe Railway. Its purpose is to develop a permanent and prosperous community for the constant production of traffic for the railway. Land ownership herein is only a necessary incident for the establishment of population. Exceedingly low land prices are a part of an economic development policy. Prices are based on relative costs of land preparation and planting; on adaption and location. In comparison with other values in Southern California it provides a surprising investment opportunity.¹⁰

Both Sinnard's career and the actions of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company in Rancho San Dieguito help to elucidate the role of the railroad in the development of California. Railroad companies, of course, had long been instrumental in land development in the American west. Indeed, the vast land grants and rights-of-way awarded to the railroads by the U.S. Government as incentives to lay transcontinental lines virtually assured that these companies would turn to land development in order to lure Americans westward, and to maximize their investments.¹¹ In California, as elsewhere, the expansion of the railroads stimulated growth of the real estate industry; for example, the arrival of the Santa Fe Railway in San Diego in late 1885 began a regional land boom that generated numerous new coastal and inland towns, among them Oceanside, Encinitas, La Jolla, Pacific Beach, and Escondido. At that time another subsidiary of the Santa Fe, the San Diego Land and Town Company, planned Chula Vista, just north of the border with Mexico.¹² Farther north, in the area between Los Angeles and the Oregon border, the Colonization Department of the Southern Pacific Railroad sponsored several developments along their Sunset, Shasta, and Odgen routes, including Pacific Groves and Paso Robles Hot Springs.¹³ "Quickly platted, extravagantly advertised, and energetically

⁹ The exact date is uncertain; however, Sinnard's first extant report to the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company was made in March 1921, and it seems likely that he would have been hired some time before that.

¹⁰ L. G. Sinnard, "California's Community Masterpiece" (n.p., n.d. [1924?]), unpaginated.

¹¹ Richard C. Overton, Burlington West: A Colonization History of the Burlington Railroad (New York: Russell & Russell, 1941): 3-4.

¹² John W. Reps, Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 278.

¹³ The Colonization Department of the Southern Pacific performed essentially the same function as the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company--the development of railroad-owned property.

promoted,"¹⁴ these were tourist towns, designed to take advantage of the east and midwest's appetite for the myth of golden California.

Creating that appetite for tourism and travel were, among others, the railroads. Kevin Starr has noted the overwhelming role of the Southern Pacific in domesticating the image of southern California in the 1870s.¹⁵ Publicity agent Jerome Madden's task was to replace the seemingly dangerous myth of cowboys, pistoleros, and miners with a different and potentially more profitable illusion of homesteaders, health seekers, and tourists who would seek instead the fertile, sun-drenched California of Spanish dons and padres. Similarly, beginning in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Santa Fe built Mission and Mediterranean Revival stations all along their routes, as a way of advertising their rail lines to California, and as a subtle means of luring tourists and investors alike to the state.¹⁶ By the early twentieth century specific administrative divisions within the railroads had been created to produce and circulate innumerable brochures, pamphlets, and circulars extolling the virtues of various routes and lands in which the railroads had invested. In 1908, Southern Pacific Publications included *Sunset Magazine*, "a beautifully illustrated monthly . . . dealing with land and seas beyond the Rockies"; a dozen handbooks, "prepared with great care from notes and data gathered by local agents" that were "profusely illustrated from the best photographs, and form a series invaluable to the tourist, settler, and investor"; and free circulars, including "California for the Homemaker," "Eat California Fruit," "Cool Sea Breezes," and several primers for children.¹⁷

Such emphasis placed on the promotion and advertising of railroad lands surely influenced L. G. Sinnard, who began work for the Southern Pacific's Passenger Department as a clerk in 1905.¹⁸ Although there is tantalizingly little known about Sinnard, the outline of his career can be sketched with some certainty.¹⁹ Employed by the Passenger Department (which was, among other tasks, in charge of promotion, advertising, and Southern Pacific publications) at least through 1907, his marriage announcement in June of that year noted that "Sinnard . . . is considered one of the able and rising young men with the [Southern Pacific] company."²⁰ From 1908 through 1911, Sinnard was not listed in the San Francisco city directory. Because later publicity states that he was "formerly in charge of the Colonization Department, Southern Pacific

¹⁴ Reps, 278.

¹⁵ Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 41.

¹⁶ John R. Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983): 202.

¹⁷ Taken from information listed on the inside cover of the handbook "The Coast Country of California," Southern Pacific Publications, San Francisco, 1908. In the collection of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Other titles in this series included: "The Sacramento Valley of California," "The San Joaquin Valley of California," "California Fishing," "Government Lands In Nevada," "The New Arizona," "Wayside Notes Along the Sunset Route," and "North Bay Counties, California."

¹⁸ 1905 Crocker-Langley San Francisco Directory, p. 1703.

¹⁹ Neither the date of Sinnard's birth nor death is known; his educational experiences are similarly unclear. It is known, however, that he did not attend the University of California, Berkeley, and that his first name was Leon.

²⁰ "Miss Hazel Henderson to Become Mrs. Sinnard at Noon Today," *San Francisco Call*, 5 June 1907: 4.

Railroad,"²¹ it seems safe to assume that during those years Sinnard worked in some capacity for that department, probably at a development outside of the Bay Area. In 1912, the city directory again lists him in San Francisco, as an independent "land expert" with an office at 704 Market.²² As such, he worked over the next decade on numerous land development schemes, including one in Atascadero, California, beginning in 1913, where he devised the "platting of the residential subdivision."²³ Thus, by the time he was hired by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, Sinnard was an experienced and professional land developer and subdivision expert, the logical choice for a railroad subsidiary interested in property development.²⁴

Sinnard's analysis of Rancho San Dieguito began with evaluations of the overall layout of the property, as well as the soils, water supply, and existing roads, which were measured, recorded, and assessed with the assistance of J. B. Lippincott Engineering Co. In March 1921 Sinnard presented the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company officials with the first part of his study of Rancho San Dieguito. This "Development Survey" is no longer extant; all that remains is the "Reconnaissance Soil Map" which accompanied it. The map, showing a plan of Rancho San Dieguito, the San Dieguito River and Reservoir, the roads and pumping plant laid out by Fletcher, and the irrigation pipelines, details the soil content of the land. The contents of the report itself can, however, be partially reconstructed with the help of Sinnard's second, supplementary report, the "Proposed Subdivision of Rancho San Dieguito" of September 1921.²⁵

"In suggesting development to be made all decisions are controlled by the question of the merchantability of the product offered for sale," Sinnard stated at the outset, noting that the Land Improvement Company's first and primary goal should be "intensive, high-class horticultural development." Moreover, he added, such a development could be complemented by a correspondingly high-class residential subdivision, which would attract more investors to the property: "conditions today are more favorable to the selling of residential tracts combining suburban comforts with the freedom and attractiveness of rural life than for property adapted only to agriculture." A high-grade residential development that lured wealthy investors would also mean an increase in the Santa Fe's ridership from the east and midwest. Potential investors could

²¹ Atascadero Bulletin no. 7 (September 1915): inside cover. In the collection of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. See also Ruth R. Nelson, Rancho Santa Fe: Yesterday and Today (privately printed, 1954), 15.

²² 1912 Crocker-Langley San Francisco Directory, p. 1552.

²³ Atascadero Bulletin (1916): 6. Atascadero, promoted by the real estate developer E. G. Lewis, who later founded Palos Verdes Estates, was a 23,000-acre site near Monterey planned as a multiple-use community with agricultural, industrial, and business districts, as well as several different residential areas.

²⁴ One source notes that Sinnard was recommended to the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company by "Prof. E. W. Rickson [sic] of the University of California." ("To Transform Big Range into Farm Center," San Diego Union June 11, 1922, sec. 2, p. 1.) E. J. Wickson was the former Dean of the Department of Agriculture and Horticulture at the University of California, Berkeley, and was "in charge of Horticulture and Agriculture" at Atascadero. (Atascadero Bulletin (September 1915): inside cover.)

²⁵ Copies of the "Reconnaissance Soil Map" and the "Proposed Subdivision of Rancho San Dieguito" are on file at the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives. Unfortunately, this second proposal, whose index lists over 40 pages of recommendations, has only survived through page 8. Nevertheless, these pages are sufficient to gain a fairly full understanding of the intentions of both Sinnard and the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company.

be enticed, Sinnard suggested, by the climate: "while this factor may appear to be overworked in the advertising of Southern California it is appreciated, understood, and paid for by people who are seeking it. Proper environments should be supplied to enhance this value."²⁶

Conditions for this "proper environment" were twofold. First, restrictions were to be placed "governing cost and design of buildings, [as well as] proper maintenance of orchard plantings and improvements," to insure that an elite "community equal in wealth, ambition and productive power to any of the most advanced suburban developments of Southern California" would be established. Second, a "Civic Center" would provide "efficient community service" in a convenient, centralized location at the very heart of the San Dieguito property. In order to make "the project attractive to the class of people to whom it must be presented," Sinnard suggested that the Civic Center contain, among other embellishments, a guest house, "for the accommodation of people inspecting the property," which would be placed at a strategic location providing fine views of the development site, and would function as a kind of social or community center; a store building that would also contain the project offices; a garage and service station; and a school, "designed for expansion as demand arises." In conclusion, Sinnard noted: "thought has been given to the grouping of these buildings. They should harmonize architecturally."²⁷ Although he did not specify the architectural style in which he thought the buildings should be designed, Sinnard did provide a preliminary layout for the Civic Center area (reproduced in HABS drawings, HABS No. CA-2305, sheet 1).

Shown as a basically rectangular area encompassing about ten blocks in the center of the project area, Sinnard's proposal for the Civic Center subdivision is an awkward combination of prominent, non-axially arranged structures (school, hotel, open-air theater) placed within a series of roads and small park-like areas. The plan is divided into four main sections: a business and administrative area, encompassing the hotel, garage, and store; a group of four adjoining blocks divided into regular rectangular lots, probably intended for residential use; and a school building, which literally and figuratively bridges the space between these two zones. The fourth area includes the open-air theater and several small, ill-proportioned blocks; it was probably intended to incorporate both residences and parks. It should be noted, however, that the importance of Sinnard's plan for the Civic Center lies not in the specifics of his proposed layout, but in his conception of the area as a centralized, compact, mixed-use commercial and residential space in which the rituals of public community life would occur.²⁸

²⁶ L. G. Sinnard, "Proposed Subdivision of Rancho San Dieguito, San Diego County, California, Property of Santa Fe Land Improvement Company: Land Valuations and Development Costs" (September 1921), 7, 3. Copy on file, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

²⁷ Sinnard, 3, 4, 7-8.

²⁸ Several planning concepts used in the Atascadero development reappear in Sinnard's plan for Rancho San Dieguito, and form an interesting backdrop to that plan. Atascadero's central business district was called the "Civic Center," and featured a central "Administration Building." Further, the design and shape of the Civic Center, formed by intersecting cross-axes, and its placement in the physical core of the development, were all echoed in Rancho San Dieguito. In addition, the high-class residential district, called the Estates, had numerous restrictions, including those governing land use, resubdivision, and the minimum cost of buildings, that were also incorporated in the later Sinnard plan.

If Sinnard's Civic Center plan was somewhat ungainly, his subdivision map for the entire Rancho San Dieguito project area showed a more practiced touch (fig. 1). Fifty-eight blocks were laid out, each incorporating from four to eighteen lots, all connected by a system of curved, winding roads that followed the natural terrain. The "size of subdivision units," Sinnard noted, "was determined by consideration of many factors, including location, topography, soil, adaptation and accessibility. Every lot has good road frontage and a desirable building site and its boundaries were laid out with particular care so as to provide the best possible conditions for efficient and practical tillage and irrigation."²⁹ The subdivision map represented Sinnard's scheme for development at Rancho San Dieguito: lots for residential and horticultural use which augmented the project's selling points--view, rural charm, orchard acreage, irrigation, prominent building sites on estate-sized lots--while concurrently maximizing the developer's potential profit.

The reaction of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company and its president, W. E. Hodges, to Sinnard's master plan for the development of Rancho San Dieguito must have been satisfactory, for the proposal was accepted, and Sinnard invited to stay on as project manager. Over the winter of 1921-22, an experimental crop of 100 acres of peas and other vegetables was grown on the highest mesas on the property, to test for frost and other potential agricultural hazards. An architectural firm also had to be chosen, to work up a more compelling Civic Center plan, and to begin to design the buildings that would be erected there.

THE REQUA & JACKSON SITE PLAN AND LILIAN RICE

It is not known whether the architectural style or the architects for the Rancho San Dieguito project were decided first, but the choice of one certainly informed the other. After Sinnard's proposals were accepted, the San Diego architectural firm of Requa and Jackson was given the commission to develop the Civic Center site plan and buildings. Both Requa and Jackson had apprenticed with the architect Irving Gill, and their work throughout the 1920s exemplified the contemporary search for an architectural style that would be appropriate for the unique environment of southern California. Requa, especially, was committed to the development of a style which, inspired by the architecture of western Mediterranean countries, could be adapted to the specifics of southern California living. His travels to Spain, the western Mediterranean, and to former Spanish colonies in Latin America produced a series of pattern books that were photographic compilations of specific buildings, architectural details, and elements that Requa hoped would be used as source material for the new style. "By study of the basic features contributing to the perfection of the Mediterranean type," Requa wrote, "American architects can gain much in inspiration, suggestions and ideas useful in the development of styles suitable for this country, particularly in sections of similar climatic and topographical conditions."³⁰ While Requa's "Southern California" style is related to other contemporary revival movements throughout the country (and, indeed, is just one manifestation of the broader revival

²⁹ Sinnard, 5.

³⁰ Richard S. Requa, Architectural Details in Spain and the Mediterranean (Los Angeles: Monolith Portland Cement Company, 1926), forward.

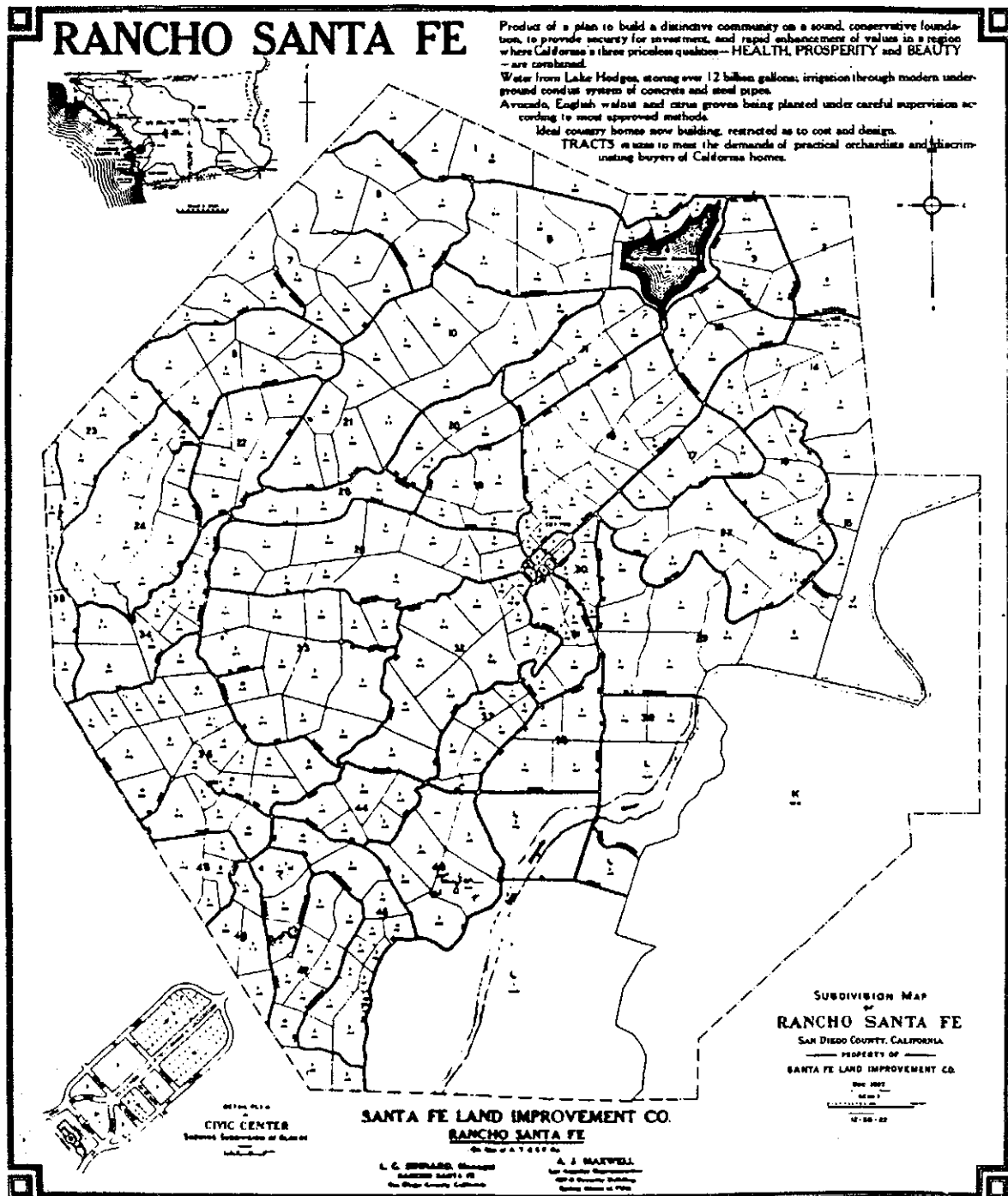


Figure 1. Plan for the subdivision by L. G. Sinnard from Connie Clotfelter, Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe (Rancho Santa Fe: Congreg, 1985), 16.

movement popular throughout the American Southwest called variously Spanish, Spanish Colonial, or Mediterranean³¹), he did stress that Mediterranean architecture, and specific Mediterranean architectural elements, should not be blindly copied, but rather adapted and modernized to contemporary Californian life.³²

That the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company should choose as its architects a firm specializing in a Spanish-inspired "Southern California" style is not surprising. The popularity of architectural forms derived from what were seen as California's indigenous building types--the stucco-covered and adobe missions, presidios and pueblos erected during the days of Spanish and Mexican colonization--had prompted successive waves of Hispanic-inspired structures throughout the southland.³³ After the success of Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's elaborate Spanish Colonial Revival buildings for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, the style became even more indelibly associated with the area's romanticized colonial past. Little wonder, then, that the developers of a property that traced its history to a Mexican land grant, who were interested in attracting wealthy investors from the East and Midwest, opted for an architectural style that so clearly brought to mind popularly held notions of the California experience. It should be recalled that the Santa Fe Railway had already shown an interest in the image-making possibilities of architecture when they began to build Mission Revival stations throughout the 1890s; given this tradition, the choice of Requa's "Southern California" style seems doubly appropriate. One last factor solidified the decision to hire the firm for the Rancho San Dieguito project. Requa's experience in the redevelopment of Ojai, a small town near Los Angeles that was remodeled in the Mission/Mediterranean Revival style beginning in 1916, showed that he was comfortable in adapting the style to the more complex requirements of civic planning.³⁴

Soon after they received the commission for Rancho San Dieguito, Requa and Jackson turned over primary responsibility for the project to a young associate in their office, Lilian

³¹ Clarification is needed on this issue. The difficulty arises with an attempt to determine the direct sources of this "revival" style. As David Gebhard (see n. 33) has noted, the various phases of the Hispanic Revival in California, which he dates from 1895-1930, were all based on a renewed interest in the state's colonial heritage. The revival styles of the 1920s, to which Requa--and Lilian Rice--contributed, differed from the early phases in an insistence upon more historically precise source material. Since California's colonial buildings ultimately derived from Spanish architecture, the 1920s revivalists sought out those sources. Thus Requa and Rice's reliance on Spanish inspiration was much more profound than was their dependence on Spanish colonial forms. Nevertheless, their exposure to Spanish colonial architecture was fundamental to their conception of an indigenously Californian architecture. Hence the difficulty of terminology. Despite the importance of the Spanish colonial example, this author has chosen to name the style employed by Requa and Rice *Spanish Revival*, because of the more direct link between Spanish forms and the early architecture of Rancho Santa Fe.

³² Mary Taschner, "Richard Requa: Southern California Architect, 1881-1941" (M.A. thesis, University of San Diego, 1982), 98-101.

³³ David Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1885-1930)," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 26 (May 1967): 131-147.

³⁴ Lilian J. Rice, "Architecture - A Community Asset," Architect and Engineer 94 (July 1928): 44. For information on Ojai, see Taschner, 71-78; and David Gebhard and Robert Winter, A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1977), 498-503.

Jenette Rice.³⁵ Rice, born in National City, just south of San Diego, in 1889, grew up in the southland, but was educated in northern California. In 1910, she became one of the first women to graduate from the School of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied under John Galen Howard. Her exposure while at Berkeley to the influential Bay Region movement of architects (led by Bernard Maybeck) provided her first experience with the concepts she would later exploit successfully at Rancho Santa Fe--the development of an indigenous and unique architectural style that expressed the qualities of the surrounding landscape.³⁶ After Rice's return to San Diego, other influences affected the development of her style. For a short period, she worked as a draftsman in the office of Hazel Waterman, who had also studied under Irving Gill. Shortly before Rice was in her employ, Waterman supervised the first restoration of the Casa de Estudillo, an old adobe in San Diego that was popularized as "Ramona's Marriage Place," after Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel *Ramona*. The shape and form of this adobe, a one-story U-shaped building arranged around a central landscaped courtyard, one that Rice was undoubtedly exposed to, surely informed her later work at Rancho Santa Fe. Finally, Rice's interest, nurtured at Berkeley, in an expressive architecture that reflected the natural environment found a parallel in Requa's search for a "Southern California" style that articulated and complemented the region's indigenous culture, climate, and landscape.

It is not known who in the Requa and Jackson firm designed the plot plan of the Civic Center that was submitted in the spring of 1922 (reproduced in HABS drawings, HABS No. CA-2305, sheet 1). Although it has been attributed to Rice, on the basis of her authorship of the buildings that were erected there, Requa has also been cited as its creator.³⁷ Nevertheless, this plan incorporated a much more successful design than Sinnard's original scheme, while retaining his conception of the area as a mixed-use commercial and residential district. As in the Sinnard layout, the entire Civic Center area was basically rectangular, but here the outline was given a more ovoid shape with the addition of slightly curving roads, thus harmonizing the central district with the winding roads to be laid out over the rest of the project area. In addition, the overall disposition of buildings and streets was given a much more formal, City Beautiful-type arrangement, with the main landscaped boulevard, Paseo Delicias, terminating at a major focal point, the guest house. A second, cross-axial effect was created (following Via de Santa Fe) that encompassed the main civic buildings, terminating in the school. In both the commercial and garage blocks courtyards were planned for the interior of the block, retaining a sense of open space and uncrowded development within a defined street boundary. The northern part of the Civic Center, as in Sinnard's original design, was given over to two full blocks of residences.

³⁵ Although no source proves conclusively why Requa and Jackson so quickly gave Rice responsibility for the development, it is probable that the volume of their commissions in San Diego, and Rancho San Dieguito's distance from their office, precluded their more substantial involvement.

³⁶ Information on Rice was taken from Lucinda Liggett Eddy, "Lilian Jeanette Rice: The Lady as Architect" (M.A. thesis, University of San Diego, 1985). For a synopsis of the arguments in this thesis, see Lucinda Liggett Eddy, "Lilian Jenette Rice: Search for a Regional Ideal," *Journal of San Diego History* 29 (Fall 1983): 262-285. For the Bay Region style, see Leslie Mandelson Freudenheim and Elisabeth Sacks Sussman, *Building With Nature: Roots of the San Diego Bay Region Tradition* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974), and Kenneth H. Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck: Artisan, Architect, Artist* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1977).

³⁷ L. G. Sinnard, *Rancho Santa Fe, California: Yesterday and Today*, (Chula Vista: Denrich Press, n.d. [1923]), unpaginated.

Here, though, asymmetrical grouping of the structures and abundant landscaping created a casual, park-like atmosphere. Surrounding the Civic Center proper were scattered residences and groves, and parks, underscoring the linkage between the central village area and the rural landscape which encircled it. The achievement of the Requa and Jackson site plan was its merger of the formal and informal, and its articulation in palpable, physical, terms of the public and private spheres of the embryonic community, which gave meaning and voice to its developers' intentions and goals.

RANCHO SANTA FE: 1922

San Diego is indeed fortunate in having a corporation like the Santa Fe Railway take an interest in the development of this county and at this time. No doubt it was a selfish interest in that it means increased tonnage to their railroads, but whatever they do they do right, and all of us get a benefit from this most wonderful development they are now making.³⁸

On June 7, 1922, a groundbreaking ceremony was held to celebrate the beginning of work on the newly renamed Rancho Santa Fe.³⁹ The name change both advertised the beginning of the project and assured potential investors that the development had the financial support of the railway. It also provided additional publicity for the railway, which was duly promoted in newspaper articles recording the ceremony. "The greatest development project in the county at present is being carried on by the Santa Fe railroad, which has set aside between \$400,000 and \$500,000 for the work," the *San Diego Union* proclaimed on June 11.⁴⁰ Initially, work was concentrated on road construction and the laying of irrigation pipes to all lots. The subdivision plan itself was somewhat modified, with several blocks in the southeastern edge of the project area combined into units (Blocks J, K, and L) of over 100 acres, to be sold to major investors.⁴¹

The fifty miles of roads laid out by the Pioneer Truck company, under the supervision of Kenneth Volk, project engineer, reproduced Sinnard's original plan of curved, winding roadways that followed the changes in the natural terrain. The advantages of using such a road system were many: twisting roads slowed down motorists; they permitted the creation of lots of irregular size and varied shape, lots that could be developed on the basis of view or varied acreage, or in

³⁸ Col. Ed Fletcher, cited in "To Transform Big Range into Farm Center," *San Diego Union* (June 11, 1922), sec. 2, p. 1.

³⁹ There is no direct source to show when the name change actually took place. However, indirect evidence proves that it occurred after April 1922, when a report on the "Revised Tabulation of Acreage Valuations and Restrictions" (Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Files, Reginald M. Clotfelter Collection) was made for *Rancho San Dieguito*. The Requa and Jackson site plan is labeled *Rancho Santa Fe*; since it seems unlikely that work would have begun on the project in early June without an accepted plot plan for the Civic Center, it is probable that the name change can be dated between April and June 1922. It should be noted, however, that the name *Rancho Santa Fe* does not seem to have gained widespread acceptance until actual sales promotions began for the project in March 1923.

⁴⁰ "To Transform Big Range."

⁴¹ Compare Sinnard's initial plan in his "Proposed Subdivision of Rancho San Dieguito," of September 1921, and the subdivision map of Rancho Santa Fe dated December 1922, published in Connie Clotfelter, *Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe* (Rancho Santa Fe: Congreg, 1985): 16.

order to maximize the available building and orchard sites. Further, curvilinear roads were a visible symbol of the developers' intentions to create a distinctly non-urban residential environment. Historian Kenneth Jackson has noted the linkage between planned curvilinear roads and the pastoral, suburban ideal.⁴² Thus the winding roads planned by Sinnard for Rancho Santa Fe followed an established suburban tradition, and allowed even the most casual observer to place the development in that context. The Spanish names of the streets were a further reminder of Rancho Santa Fe's romantic colonial heritage, and harmonized well with the architectural style that had been chosen.⁴³

During this period orchard construction, and the initial stages of the landscaping plan, were begun. After land was cleared, the soil was broken up by setting off rows of dynamite where the roots of the trees were to be inserted.⁴⁴ The trees planted in the groves included lemons, limes, valencia and navel oranges, avocados, and walnuts. Landscaping efforts, probably overseen by the horticulturalist A. R. Sprague, were greatly aided by the presence of the eucalyptus trees the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company had planted over a decade before. Now grown to great heights, thanks in large measure to the regular irrigation methods now employed, their drooping leaves and gently swaying branches added a distinctive charm to the Rancho Santa Fe property. Other trees were also planted: wizened, twisting California and Brazilian peppers, bananas, and an occasional palm; shrubs included acacias, birds of paradise, bouganvilla, and oleanders. Small flowers, vines, and yuccas were placed in planters or draped over trellises. The islands in the middle of Paseo Delicias were also planted with low shrubbery and colorful foliage. In the curved park on Block A in the Civic Center, numerous annuals and perennials were grouped together in rounded beds.⁴⁵ None of the trees or other plantings were native to the area. Nevertheless, like the eucalyptus, they flourished in Rancho Santa Fe, transforming the indigenous scrub vegetation into a lushly planted landscape that symbolized the anticipated prosperity of the community, a living metaphor for the other transformations wrought by development.

"It was an important day [in November 1922] when ground was broken for the Guest House, the first building in the Civic Center," Lilian Rice recalled in 1928. "The office group and garage quadrangle followed shortly afterward."⁴⁶ Rice's original designs for these buildings are preserved in photographs of her preparatory sketches, now in the collection of the University Art

⁴² Kenneth T. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985; paperback reprint, 1987), 76.

⁴³ Charles R. Nelson's observation on the genesis of the Spanish street names is intriguing, but unproven: "I assume, but cannot confirm, that Sinnard himself selected the names for these roads, assisted by Lilian Rice, resident architect, and a Spanish dictionary." Nelson, "Memorandum Notes for the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society" (1991), 4.

⁴⁴ This process is recorded in a circa 1924 promotional film now in the collection of the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.

⁴⁵ This information is taken from photographs circa 1923-1927, in the collections of the San Diego Historical Society, Union Title Insurance and Trust Company Historical Collection; and the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives. There is little documentation regarding the historic landscape design for Rancho Santa Fe.

⁴⁶ Lilian J. Rice, "More Building in 1928 than ever Before," Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 7 (January 1928): 14.

Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.⁴⁷ Although, as Rice noted, "the general plan for the Civic Center has undergone some minor changes since the erection of the first building, construction work that followed has been consistent with the original idea of creating a community that would contain the simplicity and charm of a Spanish village."⁴⁸ While the changes mentioned by Rice involved a small scaling-back of the number of buildings erected in the office block (only three office buildings, and one residence, were actually built, instead of the projected construction of four and three, respectively) and a partial redesign of the garage quadrangle (so that it would comprise two distinct areas, one for the service station and the other for the storage of building materials), the remarkable continuity between her initial drawings and the completed buildings indicates the degree to which Rice's vision for Rancho Santa Fe was accepted and shared by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company.

Rice's primary goal was that the buildings harmonized with the surrounding landscape. "With the thought early implanted in my mind that true beauty lies in simplicity rather than in ornateness," Rice wrote later, "I found real joy at Rancho Santa Fe. Every environment there calls for simplicity and beauty--the gorgeous natural landscapes, the gently broken topography, the nearby mountains. No one with a sense of fitness, it seems to me, could violate these natural factors by creating anything that lacked simplicity in line and form and color."⁴⁹ Following these conditions, Rice's designs for Rancho Santa Fe exhibit a subtlety of "line and form and color," and a deliberate minimalism of proportion and scale, rarely found in the work of any other contemporary architect working in that style.

Rice's architecture has its basis in Requa's "Southern California" version of the Spanish Revival, especially in his notion that the incorporation of landscape elements into the plan of individual structures--through the use of interior courtyards, patios, and gardens--that was fundamental to Spanish architecture was also applicable in California. Her principal inspiration was the architecture of the villages of southern Spain, especially Andalusia. Although she never traveled abroad, Rice was exposed to Spanish forms through Requa's photographs of vernacular structures that he later compiled into two influential books, *Architectural Details in Spain and the Mediterranean* (1926) and *Old World Inspiration for American Architecture* (1929). The sources for numerous individual details and designs Rice created at Rancho Santa Fe can be found in these books. ("The modern architect," she wrote, "gladly accepts California's early Spanish background as the richest source of inspiration."⁵⁰) Nevertheless, Rice's synthesis of her source material and her attention to the varied needs of her clients made her style unique.

The first buildings Rice designed for the Civic Center were one-story, adobe or frame structures covered with stucco, and painted. Decorative elements were minimal--wrought-iron

⁴⁷ The drawings in the photographs are unsigned and undated, although they are in the hand of Lilian Rice, and can be dated to mid-1922. The location of the original drawings is unknown.

⁴⁸ Rice, 14.

⁴⁹ Rice, "Architecture - A Community Asset," 44.

⁵⁰ Rice, 43.

window grills or lamps, molded plaster window or door surrounds, heavy wooden doors. Colors were restrained, and generally limited to shades of white or beige, with the deep red of Spanish roof tile providing a warmer tone. What gave variety to Rice's architecture in Rancho Santa Fe was her method of allowing the function of the building, and hence its interior spatial arrangement, to determine the exterior appearance. This functionalist emphasis was combined with an inventive use of her architectural typology. Her process was reductive, rather than additive; the limited number of design elements from which she drew were combined and transformed to create a seemingly effortless, expressive architecture. Thus no two buildings in the Civic Center have the same facade--indeed, no individual architectural detail is repeated from one structure to another. Further, the buildings on each block were placed in asymmetrical groupings, or set back at slight differences from the street or sidewalk, so that the area as a whole would have the appearance of having evolved over time, recalling the "simplicity and charm of a Spanish village."

For the Guest House, Rice designed a rambling, modified U-shaped building with two asymmetrical wings topped by flat parapet roofs (HABS No. CA-2307).⁵¹ One wing held twelve guest rooms, and the other the dining room and kitchen. Adjoining the dining room was a terrace and open verandah with a pergola above, intended for use as an outdoor lounge; behind the guest lounge was a large landscaped patio, where guests could stroll and admire the beauty of their surroundings. As the Guest House was the focal point of the Civic Center plan, so the focal point of the structure itself was the central section of the building, a large guest lounge with a high, vaulted ceiling and gabled roof covered with Spanish tile. Inside, this room was decorated with comfortable chairs and, one contemporary admirer noted, "a large friendly fireplace . . . The decorative fineness of the entire room lies in the exquisite simplicity of proportions and the velvety texture of the walls. No pictures are on the walls and they would be out of place there; but every window frames a picture of exquisite beauty."⁵²

The Guest House, which was soon renamed La Morada (meaning house, or dwelling place) had been conceived by Sinnard as "attractive, comfortable, accommodations for prospective buyers,"⁵³ and was to function as a crucial part of the sales strategy for the development. Hence its siting, at the top of a small hill overlooking Paseo Delicias, and the merger of indoor and outdoor spaces within its sprawling plan were intended to demonstrate the attractiveness and investment potential of Rancho Santa Fe, and introduced visitors to the architectural style of the community.

⁵¹ A report assessing "Summary Land Valuations As of March 31, 1924" (Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Files, Reginald M. Clotfelter Collection) lists the total expenses for the "Hotel" as \$51,963.60 (page 9). It is assumed that this sum refers to building construction and land improvements; it is not known whether it includes furnishings and decoration.

⁵² Lee Shippey, "Rancho Santa Fe: California's Perfectly Planned Community," Architect and Engineer 76 (February 1924): 55-63. Reprint, unpaginated.

⁵³ Sinnard, "Proposed Subdivision of Rancho San Dieguito," 8.

The group of office buildings was placed in Block G, fronting on Paseo Delicias, and bordered by Avenida de Acacias and Via de Santa Fe (HABS No. CA-2306).⁵⁴ These three structures, as befitted their civic character, were given a more formal exterior arrangement than any other buildings in the Civic Center, through the application of symmetrically placed openings, large windows, and classical architectural elements--quatrefoil, quoins, Tuscan columns, dome-like structures, and an arcade. Despite the solemn nature of the ornament, each building was given a distinctly different design, so that the variety of architectural form enlivened the street composition, while retaining the dignified outline required by the buildings' function. The two corner buildings were used as the administrative headquarters for the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, and as office space for the resident professional staff hired by the company. A small store and post office were also located in these structures. The headquarters and office buildings were linked by an arcaded structure called the Administration Building,⁵⁵ which, despite its name, was actually a passageway between the two adjoining buildings, and a screen between Paseo Delicias and the courtyard on the interior of the block. This courtyard was used by the landscape and orchard contractors hired by the Land Improvement Company for display and storage. The central location in the Civic Center given over to the Land Improvement Company's orchard and landscaping interests indicated their crucial importance in the Company's plan for the Rancho Santa Fe project.

Also fundamental to the conception of Rancho Santa Fe was the garage block.⁵⁶ Because there was no form of public transportation to the region and the nearest train station (serving the Santa Fe line) was in Del Mar, cars were the only means of reaching the project area. The provision of a garage and service station, where gas could be purchased, and automobile maintenance and repairs serviced, was thus of great importance to the developers. The challenge for Rice was to mask the unsightly functions of the service yard, and to continue the architectural theme of the "picturesque Spanish village."⁵⁷ She accomplished both tasks by concealing the service area--a colonnaded space covered with a shed roof--in the interior courtyard, accessible only through three gates located in the middle of the Paseo Delicias, La

⁵⁴ The report "Summary of Land Valuations As of March 31, 1924" lists the following building expenses for Block G: lot 1 (Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Offices Building, HABS No. CA-2306 A): \$8,032.61. Lot 2 (Administration Building, HABS No. CA-2306 B): \$1,428.66. Lots 3 and 4 (Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Headquarters Building, HABS No. CA-2306 C): \$16,187.54. The difference in cost between the Offices and Headquarters Buildings can be explained by noting that the latter structure was constructed using hand-made and sun-dried adobe bricks. It is probable that the expense of this procedure was such that the building material for the Offices Building was changed to frame, replacing the costly and time consuming adobe.

⁵⁵ See Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 12 (June 1928): 10; Rancho Santa Fe Progress 3 no. 4 (October 1929): cover.

⁵⁶ The report "Summary Land Valuations As of March 31, 1924" lists the cost of improvements to Block F (the garage quadrangle) as \$20,163.02. This probably reflects construction expenses related to the erection of the structures on the block, and the installation of oil and gas drums and pipes for the service station. A report dated September 30, 1925, lists an additional \$7,479.41 spent on the construction of a supply depot on the western half of this block. "Rancho Santa Fe Tabulations: Valuations of Unsold Acreage." Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Files, Reginald M. Clotfelter Collection.

⁵⁷ The question of how to design a service station was a necessary one throughout the decade, as automobile registrations almost tripled--from 10 to 23 million in the United States--in the four years between 1923 and 1927. (Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier, 162.) During this period service stations were often built in the popular revival styles of the day: Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, or, as at Rancho Santa Fe, Spanish Revival. See Alexander G. Guth, "The Automobile Service Station," Architectural Forum 45 (July 1926): 33-56.

Granada, and Via de Santa Fe facades. The buildings themselves, despite their functions as storage and service areas, were designed to resemble residential structures.⁵⁸ The rear of the block housed a supply depot for residential and orchard construction materials. The two street corners facing Paseo Delicias were left unbuilt--for a lushly planted garden on the north side, and the gasoline pump on the south--with buildings grouped around the open spaces, creating the impression of private patios. It was the treatment of the gas pump that marked Rice's full mastery of the adaption of her Spanish vernacular idiom to the necessities of contemporary life. The pump, placed at an angle to the corner in order to allow easier automobile access, was sheltered by a freestanding arch structure, covered with a gabled roof in Spanish tile, supported by log beams, vigas, and brackets. Voluminous, trailing vines and flowers grew out of two rounded planters attached to the structure. The effect, the same enthusiast marveled, was that of a "quaint old village well, around which native flowers grow, and it probably is the only filling station in America that speeding motorists halt their cars merely to look at and admire."⁵⁹

The gasoline pump in the garage block is the the best metaphor for the project's emphasis on modern facilities and equipment, sheathed in traditional architectural forms. This synthesis of the contemporary and the traditional was also demonstrated in the Requa and Jackson site plan, in which a modern planning principle (the formal, axial City Beautiful) was combined with an older type, the picturesque (symbolized by the curvilinear roads which ran through Rancho Santa Fe). Examples followed throughout the early years of the development: with the erection of all-electric residences in Rice's Spanish Revival style; with the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company's insistence on hiring on-location professionals for the convenience of land purchasers, so that the creation of the historic Rancho Santa Fe "look" could be quickly and painlessly accomplished; with the implementation of architectural, horticultural, and land-use restrictions to ensure that that "look" would continue in perpetuity. All of these factors were part of a conscious attempt to attract investors with the best California had to offer: not only climate, but tradition, modern conveniences, and modern services. As Sinnard wrote in the introduction to a promotional booklet soon after the project opened, Rancho Santa Fe was "a Plan linking the romance and inspiration of *Yesterday* with the fulfillment of *Today*."⁶⁰

⁵⁸ These buildings were variously named "Tire Building," "Battery Building," "Accessories and Oil," "Watchman's Room," and "Rest Room" on an extant sheet of elevations for the garage block, now in the collection of the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.

⁵⁹ Shippey, unpaginated.

⁶⁰ Sinnard, "Rancho Santa Fe, California: Yesterday and Today," frontispiece, [italics original]

DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION: 1923

Conveniently located between popular recreation acres of mountain and seashore, smiled upon by America's finest climate and touched by the hand of romance, Rancho Santa Fe is a veritable land of contentment. Possessing rural charm, plus all necessary attributes of urban life, it is just such a place as ambitious young men desire when seeking Opportunity - just such a place as older men instinctively select when they decide to lay aside the mantle of leadership to enjoy the fruits of achievement. Here men may safely build homes that reflect imagination, realize life-long ambitions and become permanent shrines of family pride and family tradition. More than three-fourths of the land has been acquired by families doing exactly that - building and landscaping lovely homes, planting orchards of citrus, avocado or deciduous fruit trees, and otherwise contributing to the creation of a permanently beautiful neighborhood without counterpart in the world.⁶¹

On December 28, 1922, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company's final plan for Rancho Santa Fe was officially filed as Map 1742 in the San Diego County Recorder's office. Over the next few months, until the formal public opening of the project on March 11, 1923, the organization of the Company's sales force, the employment of on-location architectural, engineering, and horticultural experts, and the final sales restrictions were developed and finalized.

As Sinnard had suggested in his original proposals, restrictions on architectural style, land use, and horticultural development were incorporated into each sales contract and deed for property sold by the Land Improvement Company in Rancho Santa Fe. Either a home and approved landscaping design, or an orchard covering one-third of the acreage bought, had to be in place one year after property was purchased--ensuring that, even if property was bought strictly for investment purposes, some kind of improvement would occur. Minimum building costs, ranging from \$4,000 to \$20,000, depending on location, were established for all lots; designs for any proposed structure in the property area had to be approved by the Land Improvement Company's architectural staff; stores and shops were permitted only on certain lots in the Civic Center, all "nuisance" businesses were prohibited, and no billboards were to be erected, in the entire project area. Paragraph fifth in Article II, section 7 of each deed specified that ownership was restricted to members of the "white or Caucasian race; but persons of any race may be on said land as employees or servants of the owner."⁶² The restrictions were intended to insure that only those with sufficient capital would invest in Rancho Santa Fe; they "automatically attracted," it was later written, "not the pioneer farmer of too small means, but successful citizens with the the financial strength to carry out at once a specific program."⁶³ Moreover, once the initial investment had been made, the restrictions protected the property owner from the threat

⁶¹ Sinnard, "Rancho Santa Fe Today," in John Steven McGroarty, The Endless Miracle of California (Chula Vista: Denrich Press, n.d. [1926?]), unpaginated.

⁶² Original sales contracts, Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Files, Reginald M. Cloifeller Collection, and the report "Summary of Land Values" in the same collection.

⁶³ S. R. Nelson, "Rancho Santa Fe Contributes Substantially to San Diego County's Wealth," San Diego Magazine (September 1930): 6.

that his or her land would be devalued by unsightly neighbors, or unattractive structures erected on adjacent lots, or the smell from a nearby tannery; similarly, such a scheme would protect the larger investment made by the Santa Fe Railway in the Land Improvement Company. In sum, the restrictions were meant to insure the financial security of all connected to the project.

Another aspect of the sales strategy for Rancho Santa Fe was the establishment of a staff of on-site professionals. Because of the nature of its sales restrictions, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company chose to lease office space to experts who would be available to consult with investors, and facilitate the planning and construction of residences, orchards, or landscaping programs. This was an especially important service provided for those who did not yet plan to reside on their property, but were required by the restrictions to develop at least part of their land. An early brochure lauded this feature:

At Rancho Santa Fe the organization of expert service divisions is the pride of the project. No where in all of California has there been equalled such a demonstration of development service. No where have non-resident owners enjoyed such complete, satisfactory and profitable co-operation. Here the planting of orchards and the building of homes may be undertaken with confidence because of a highly qualified and trained staff directing all details. Engineering, land development, orchard planting and maintenance, architectural designs, building and landscaping are all noteworthy features of Rancho Santa Fe service.⁶⁴

The staff included Lilian Rice, whose association with the Requa and Jackson firm ended in the late 1920s, but who stayed on in Rancho Santa Fe as resident architect; Will King, a surveyor and engineer; orchard developers U. L. Voris, Bill and Volant Ballard, and R. E. Badger; horticulturist A. R. Sprague, and after 1925 landscape architect Glenn A. Moore; and several building contractors, including Harold Ketchum. Although they were not direct employees of the Land Improvement Company, these workers functioned under the Company's auspices, and were an integral part of the day-to-day implementation of its development program.

The sales force was organized by location; agents in Los Angeles, San Diego, and at Rancho Santa Fe itself were authorized to contact potential buyers and sell land.⁶⁵ In Los Angeles, where the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company was headquartered, A. J. Maxwell, a company officer, served as the local sales representative. Ed Fletcher, who had been instrumental in the development of the Hodges Dam, and who was president of the San Dieguito Mutual Water Company, was the San Diego agent.⁶⁶ Sinnard, as on-site manager of the Rancho Santa Fe project, headed a team of three sales personnel: P. C. Hosmer, Jack Ladd, and Sidney R.

⁶⁴ L. G. Sinnard, "California's Community Masterpiece," (n.d. [1924?]), unpaginated.

⁶⁵ See the Rancho Santa Fe map reproduced in Connie Clotfelter, Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe, 16. This map lists Sinnard as manager of Rancho Santa Fe, and Maxwell as the Los Angeles representative. An identical map in the San Diego Historical Society has a different label, which identifies Fletcher as the San Diego sales agent.

⁶⁶ Fletcher had bought the property rights to the Solana Beach townsite adjoining Rancho Santa Fe to the west, and in 1923 began subdividing and selling lots there. His sales contract with the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company seems to have been short-lived, probably because he chose to concentrate his energies on the development of Solana Beach. See Fletcher, Memories, 226, 259, and the Assessment Books, Santa Fe Irrigation District, 1923 .

Nelson. These men also functioned in other capacities; for example, Nelson was Sinnard's assistant and project accountant.⁶⁷

The extensive promotional campaign seems to have been organized by Sinnard, to judge from the credits on the surviving brochures and advertisements. Publicity was solicited in many ways. Early newspaper advertisements were coordinated to appear with articles in the real estate section of the *Los Angeles Times* or *San Diego Union*.⁶⁸ The articles generally reported on Rancho Santa Fe's progress, or announced a new aspect of the development--such as the formation of the Santa Fe Irrigation District in January 1924, the organization created to regulate the provision of Lake Hodges water to Rancho Santa Fe and Solana Beach.⁶⁹ Articles also appeared in an amazingly varied number of periodicals, from *The Earth*, published by the Santa Fe Railway (and advertised by the slogan, "Especially the best part of it - the Santa Fe Southwest"), to *California Cultivator*, "An Illustrated Weekly for the Rural Home and Ranch," *Standard Oil Bulletin*, *San Diego Business Magazine*, and *California Arts and Architecture*.⁷⁰ These articles, while varied in topic according to the perspective of their readers, all nevertheless reported positively on Rancho Santa Fe, stressing the uniqueness of the planned community and the beauty of its landscape and architecture. Indeed, the attention paid to Rice's designs in the architectural trade journals also proved useful for promotional purposes, and were duly noted in advertisements and brochures.⁷¹

National newspapers have not been examined, but some kind of attempt to reach a trans-continental audience seems to have been made, on the evidence of a promotional "Know America" film about Rancho Santa Fe that was made circa 1924. This remarkable twenty-minute document surveys all aspects of the development--orchard plantings, the irrigation system, and the early Civic Center buildings, with a strong focus on La Morada--with title cards providing information. The existence of this film indicates the extent to which the financial backing of the Santa Fe Railway allowed Rancho Santa Fe's promoters to spend what seems to have been a great deal of money on the dissemination of information about the project.

⁶⁷ Charles R. Nelson, "Earlier Years in San Diego and Rancho Santa Fe" (1989), 14, 66.

⁶⁸ See, for example, articles and advertisements in the March 11, 1923, November 25, 1923, and January 24, 1926, *Los Angeles Times*, and the March 11, 1923, January 1, 1924, and July 3, 1927, *San Diego Union*. Advertisements also occasionally appeared in magazines targeted to tourists and travelers. See the advertisement "The Place to Make Your Dreams Come True," *California Southland* 68 (August 1925): 31.

⁶⁹ "New Irrigation Districts Formed in County," *San Diego Union*, January 1, 1924.

⁷⁰ H. L. Shippey, "Facts About Rancho Santa Fe," *The Earth* 19 (September 1923): 1-2; "Beautifying Capital' At Rancho Santa Fe," *California Cultivator* 60 (May 26, 1923): 615, 618; "Rancho Santa Fe Development," *Standard Oil Bulletin* 11 (October 1923): 12-15; Bruce B. Starke, "Rancho Santa Fe: Back to the Farm for Gentlemen," *San Diego Business Magazine* (February 1927): ?; and M. Urmey Seares, "The Village of Rancho Santa Fe," *California Arts and Architecture* 38 (September 1930): 38-39, 66.

⁷¹ Seares; Lee Shippey; Lee Shippey, "An Exceptionally Planned Rural Community," *American City Magazine* 31 (September 1924): 232-234; Rose Henderson, "Small Public Schools in California," *Architectural Record* 61 (April 1927): 356-357, 359; *Architectural Record* 62 (October 1928): 315-321; Henry Wright, "The Place of the Apartment in the Modern Community," *Architectural Record* 67 (March 1930): 246-247.

Brochures, especially in the first few years of sales promotion, seem to have been the primary means devised to reach the prospective investor. The brochures, several of which were written by Sinnard, contained numerous flattering photographs of the Civic Center (most of which were endlessly recycled in pamphlets, advertisements, and articles alike), detailed information on the history of the development, and outlined the advantages of owning property in Rancho Santa Fe.⁷² The company commissioned one pamphlet and several "Mission Plays," pageant dramas enacted annually at the Mission San Gabriel outside of Los Angeles, from John Steven McGroarty, the author of "California: Its History and Romance." McGroarty's close association with the Spanish Colonial Revival and his florid prose--entitled "The Endless Miracle of California," his brochure emphasized the romantic history of the Osunas and Rancho San Dieguito, and Sinnard's "vision, high ideals, and unflinching courage, [which] conceived and builded Rancho Santa Fe"--were intended to attract those who sought investment in a site rich in associations with California's past.⁷³ Other brochures were reprints of especially laudatory magazine articles, such as Lee Shippey's review of the development in the February 1924 issue of *Architect and Engineer*. Most pamphlets were sent out as a result of inquiries made to sales offices, or in response to newspaper advertisements; there was probably also some kind of coordination with Santa Fe offices and promotion departments outside of California. In these brochures one finds a combination of all the different sales methods originally suggested by Sinnard--an emphasis on the advantages of climate, of the beauty and productivity of the land, of the protections offered by architectural and horticultural restrictions--that formed the mainstay of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company's sales message throughout the 1920s.

As evidenced by the quotation at the beginning of this section, the developers intended to appeal to both young and old investors: those who would begin their families in the community, or those who would buy property to build a retirement home. The one basic requirement was not age, but money. "Santa Fe rancho is going to be about the most exclusive community of its kind on earth," said a Santa Fe Land Improvement Company representative to a *San Diego Union* reporter when the project opened in March 1923. The reporter added: "The fact that a man lives there will be evidence of intelligence and financial responsibility, because 'shoe-string men' can't get in."⁷⁴

⁷² For example, Sinnard, "California's Community Masterpiece"; Sinnard, "Rancho Santa Fe, California: Yesterday and Today."

⁷³ McGroarty also produced a similarly baroque pamphlet on Santa Barbara, California, dated 1925, that was sponsored by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

⁷⁴ "Unique Land Settlement Project to be Thrown Open," *San Diego Union* 11 March 1923, sec. 2, p. 1.

PROGRESS AND CHANGE: 1924-1929

The momentum of Rancho Santa Fe's growth is increasing every year--sales were greater in the first six months of 1928 than during all of 1927--and it is reasonable to believe that within a few years San Diego county will have in Rancho Santa Fe a country estate community excelling in magnificence anything found in the Golden State.⁷⁵

Land Sales and Purchasers

The sale of property in Rancho Santa Fe progressed at a slow, steady pace, with the percentage of sold lands improving from nearly 30 percent of available property in 1924, to more than two-thirds in 1927 (fig. 2). Perhaps the most important effect of land sales was the subsequent large increase in the number of lots, as the Land Improvement Company and individual purchasers resubdivided their property. One example was the Rancho Santa Fe Golf Club Estates, a Land Improvement Company development of several hundred small residential lots, generally one-and-a-half to seven acres, planned for blocks 18 and 26, surrounding the Rancho Santa Fe Golf Course.⁷⁶ Privately sponsored subdivision was encouraged by the Land Improvement Company, because it further increased the number of lots available for sale.⁷⁷ Further, resubdivision by individual property owners demonstrated that, once initiated, development in Rancho Santa Fe would continue of its own volition, almost independent of any action by the original developers.

Those who bought property in the ranch proper (that is, the area in Rancho Santa Fe exclusive of the Civic Center) were for the most part older, financially and professionally established men and women. In February 1927, an article entitled "Back to the Farm for Gentlemen" published in the *San Diego Business Magazine* issued the following list of prominent owners: "C. A. Dunham, Chicago; C. F. Pease, Chicago; C. A. Schafer, Manager of the Dupont Nitrate Co., of South America, Harrisburg, Pa.; Louis R. Wallace, mining engineer, Monrovia; Briggs C. Keck, subdivider, Pasadena; C. D. Wiman, Director, John Deere Plow Co., Moline, Ill.; Norman Carmichael, Director Phelps-Dodge Co., Duxbury, Mass.; A.C. Christiancy, financier, New York; D. M. Richards, financier, New York; Edgerton Shore, former state

⁷⁵ S. R. Nelson. "Rancho Santa Fe Contributes Substantially to San Diego County's Wealth," 6.

⁷⁶ The resubdivision of Block 18 was filed as map 2089 on January 30, 1928, in the San Diego County Records Office. The resubdivision of Block 26 as map 2129 was filed on September 12, 1928. The golf course was initiated by the Rancho Santa Fe Country Club, a group of property owners incorporated in October 1927, and sponsored by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. Opened in July 1929, the course was designed by Max Behr, and the clubhouse by noted Santa Barbara architect George Washington Smith.

⁷⁷ See, for example, "Keck Develops DeLuxe Estates," *The Endless Miracle* 1 no. 2 (August 1927): 7. In December 1927, the Rancho Santa Fe Land Company, Inc., was founded by a number of property owners in order to develop lots 21 and 22. Gail MacLeod, "Rancho Santa Fe Business Ventures, 1927-1928," (memorandum prepared for the Rancho Santa Fe Association, March 1986), 2.

PERCENTAGE OF RANCHO SANTA FE PROPERTY OWNED BY THE SANTA FE
LAND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY, 1923-1931*

RANCH= all lots in Rancho Santa Fe, exclusive of the Civic Center

YEAR	TOTAL LOTS	TOTAL RANCH	TOTAL CIVIC CENT.	TOTAL % LOTS	TOTAL % RANCH	TOTAL % CIVIC CENT.
1923	354	290	64	100	100	100
1924	390	326	64	71.3	66	98.4
1925	404	339	65	66.1	61	93.8
1926	440	373	67	48.9	41	94
1927	461	393	68	31.7	26	64.7
1928	616	546	70	37.2	35	57.1
1929	749	676	73	41.5	41	43.8
1930	741	672	69	40.2	41	31.9
1931	749	674	75	49.3	48	64

Source: Santa Fe Irrigation District Assessment Books, 1923-1931
Compiled by: E. Matthew Walter and Sheri L. Bonstelle

* In 1929, the Rancho Santa Fe Corporation bought out all but 18 lots of the property previously owned by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. In 1930, the Corporation went bankrupt, and the Land Improvement Company was forced to repossess the land. In 1930, the Corporation still owned 30 lots, but by 1931 they were recorded with no property in Rancho Santa Fe.

Fig. 2. Property ownership.

railway commissioner; and George L. Veatch, of Marshall, Field & Co., Chicago."⁷⁸ The most important early investors were without question Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, who purchased Block K (encompassing over 800 acres) in the southeastern portion of the project area in October 1926.⁷⁹ Then at the height of their popularity, Fairbanks and Pickford gave a cachet and legitimacy to owning property in Rancho Santa Fe that few other purchasers could have accomplished. This sales coup was soon exploited in numerous advertisements--one asked, rhetorically, "Who are the owners at Rancho Santa Fe? Where do they come from?" and then answered with a "random" list of twenty-eight investors, including "America's most famous motion picture couple"⁸⁰--and articles, in which Mary Pickford related plans for the property they renamed Rancho Zorro.⁸¹ Sales to prominent figures, and the use of their names in subsequent promotions, was a circular process designed to attract even more investors to the development.

If the majority of the property owners in the ranch proper were older, financially stable individuals, where *did* they come from? For what purposes did they purchase land in Rancho Santa Fe? Although there is little primary source material for analysis on this subject, some answers can be formulated on the basis of an ownership list compiled in 1926 (fig. 3).⁸² At that time, only one-fifth of the almost 200 property owners lived in Rancho Santa Fe. Over one-third lived in Los Angeles County, with another one-fifth scattered in other California locations; the remainder were listed with addresses throughout the United States, with the majority in this category residing in the midwest. From this rough data, several conclusions can be drawn. Sales promotions, which were probably concentrated in southern California, were most successful in that area--over three-quarters of the property owners in 1926 resided in-state. Although one of the original development plans--that owners from the east and midwest would increase ridership on the Santa Fe Railway--was thus not terribly effective, another strategy was successful: lots were bought as investments, as security for young families, or as the site of a future retirement home. Because most of the purchasers did not use Rancho Santa Fe as their primary place of residence, orchards were planted on the property first, in compliance with the protective restrictions--thus accomplishing another requirement of the Land Improvement Company, that the development increase tonnage for the railway--while also providing land owners with income from the sale of produce from their groves.⁸³ When

⁷⁸ Starke, "Back to the Farm for Gentlemen."

⁷⁹ Sales contract, Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Files, Reginald M. Clotfelter Collection.

⁸⁰ "Who are the owners at Rancho Santa Fe? Where do they come from?" (advertisement) San Diego Tribune 15 October 1927, sec. 2, p. 2.

⁸¹ See Mary Pickford, "California's Finest Heritage," The Modern Clubwoman (April 1927): 8, clipping on file, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives; and Caroline B. King, "Mary Pickford, Homemaker," The Country Gentleman (May 1928): 24, 94.

⁸² "Addresses of Owners," Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Files, Reginald M. Clotfelter Collection.

⁸³ On the general habit of property owners to plant orchards and landscape their lots for a period of time before construction was begun on residences, see, for example, "Pease Residence is Started," Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 5 (November 1927): 8. "Mr. Pease has prefaced the building of his home with two years of planting and landscaping."

PERMANENT RESIDENCE OF PROPERTY OWNERS, RANCHO SANTA FE
1926, 1931, 1948

PERCENTAGE OF OWNERS RESIDING IN:													Total Number of Property Owners
YEAR	RSF	SD	LA	SoCal	CalOth	NW	Rock	SW	MW	East	South	Unclass	Property Owners
1926	19.1	5.1	36.5	10.7	6.7	1.1	2.2	1.7	11.8	5.1	0.0		178
1931	23.1	7.5	35.2	7.5	5.0	1.5	2.5	1.5	11.1	4.5	0.5		189
% change	+20.9	+47.1	-3.6	-29.9	-25.4	+36.4	+13.6	-11.8	-5.9	-11.8	NA		+11.8
1948	41.5	13.6	17.0	3.7	7.8	0.7	0.7	1.4	7.8	2.7	0.3	2.7	224
% change	+79.7	+81.3	-51.7	-42.7	+5.6	-53.3	-7.2	-6.7	-29.7	-4.0	-4.0	NA	+47.7

RSF= Rancho Santa Fe
SD= San Diego County
LA= Los Angeles County
SoCal= Southern California
CalOth= California Other
NW= Northwestern States
Rock= Rocky Mountain States
SW= Southwestern States
MW= Midwestern States
East= Eastern States
South= Southern States Unclassified= No address given

Sources: 1926: "Addresses of Owners." Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Files, Reginald M. Clotfelter Collection
1931: "Addresses of Owners. Rancho Santa Fe, January 1931." Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives
1948: "Property Owners of Rancho Santa Fe. California as of May 21, 1948." Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Files.
Reginald M. Clotfelter Collection

Compiled by: Lauren Farber

Figure 3. Residences of Owners.

residences were built on the property, they generally functioned as weekend, vacation, summer, or retirement homes. Rancho Santa Fe's distance from major urban areas--almost 30 miles from San Diego, and over 100 from Los Angeles--precluded most early owners from commuting to work from their residence there.

Those owners who did live on their property did not, for the most part, rely on the rancho for their livelihood. The exceptions were, of course, the young professionals, support staff, and their families, who worked in the Civic Center and generally lived in the center itself or just on its outskirts.⁸⁴ The development of housing and other services in the Civic Center in the years after 1926 marks the second phase of development there, and the realization of Sinnard's original land-use plan for the area: a mixed-use, residential and commercial core.

Civic Center Development

Housing had been built in the Civic Center as early as 1923, when a small home, now known as the La Flecha house, was built by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company in Block G, for use as employee housing (HABS No. CA-2304). This small, cubic structure, designed by Lilian Rice in a style reminiscent of the work of the architect Irving Gill, was noteworthy because, despite the rural location, all the mechanical equipment used for lighting, water and room heating, and cooking was powered by electricity. This innovative feature was an indication of the Land Improvement Company's desire to provide modern facilities in Rancho Santa Fe. The first residents of the La Flecha house were project accountant Sidney R. Nelson and his family. Other Santa Fe Land Improvement Company employees, and resident staff, were housed at La Morada, or at temporary housing scattered around the project site.

By early 1926, the pace of development was such that more housing units were needed in the Civic Center. The Land Improvement Company commissioned Rice to design a group of four rowhouses planned for Block D, to front on Paseo Delicias (HABS Nos. CA-2310, CA-2311, CA-2312, and CA-2303). Designed and built as a unit in late 1926, the rowhouses mark the full maturity of Rice's style, and stand today as her finest achievement in Rancho Santa Fe. Because the units were sold to their owners before the construction began, Rice was free to tailor the plan of the dwellings to the requirements of their occupants. Thus, while each structure began with a minimum number of rooms--living room, dining room, kitchen and utility room, bedrooms, and bathroom--the size of each space, their placement within the plan, and the number of bedrooms, were worked out in consultation with the future inhabitants.⁸⁵ ("The first requirement is to make

⁸⁴ A third group of people completed the early population of Rancho Santa Fe: the domestics and workmen who worked on the ranch but lived outside its boundaries. The author is indebted to Charles R. Nelson for this information, contained in a letter dated July 19, 1991.

⁸⁵ The owners of the houses continued to make modifications to the original designs and specifications, even as construction progressed through the summer and fall of 1926. For example, Alteration Order Number One, dated August 2, authorized the substitution of a "Shower instead of a bathtub in Residence 'D' [Glenn and Ida May Moore Rowhouse, HABS No. CA-2303], with Speakman mixometer with china wall plate and swivel china head. Shower to be covered with an approved metal lath and plastered two coats of cement plaster troweled to a smooth polished surface. Shower to have a cement floor." (p. 21) Final construction costs for the "Civic Center Cottages" as of April 12, 1927, were as follows: "A" (Spurr-Clotfelter Rowhouse, HABS No. CA-2310):

the home livable, even before the general appearance is considered," Rice wrote later.⁸⁶ Although the rowhouses were built simultaneously, and even shared a number of party walls, the exteriors were designed so that each building appeared to be a distinct unit, an achievement maintained through the use of varied setbacks, enclosed patios and gardens, low gable and flat parapet roofs, and decorative iron and woodwork. As in the La Flecha house, Rice's Spanish Revival style was combined with the modern convenience of all-electric appliances and equipment. The patios and gardens, which occupied at least 50 percent of the property space of each unit, served several important functions. Enclosed by tall stuccoed walls, they ensured a degree of privacy for the owner, and separation from the neighboring commercial area; they also allowed the incorporation of landscape elements into the plan of the rowhouses themselves, and permitted an intermingling of indoor and outdoor space that was a hallmark of Rice's designs in Rancho Santa Fe.

Those who purchased the rowhouses were young professional families, most of whom worked in the Civic Center. Sidney Nelson was an employee of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. Glenn Moore was the resident landscape architect. Louise Garvey Spurr was a young widow or divorcee, who soon married Hal Badger, one of the local orchardists. Pearl Baker was an elderly woman, whose daughter and son-in-law, Edith and George Megrew, also owned property in Rancho Santa Fe; George Megrew became the town's first postmaster in 1927.

The construction of the rowhouses seems to have spurred development in the rest of the northern section of the Civic Center. Previously, all buildings had been located in the southern section of the area, and, with the exception of the La Flecha house, all had been civic or commercial in nature: the office block, La Morada, the garage quadrangle, and the first portion of the elementary school building, erected on lot C in late 1924.⁸⁷ Development after 1926, however, differed in one major way from earlier construction in the Civic Center: it was sponsored by independent property owners, not the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. It also focused on the expansion of the range of services and housing options available in the community.

It should be noted that the increase in construction in the Civic Center coincided with Sinnard's departure from Rancho Santa Fe. In late 1926 he became ill, and he resigned in the spring of 1927. He was succeeded as manager by Sidney Nelson, his assistant. Nelson continued

\$7,733.64; "B" (Sidney and Ruth Nelson Rowhouse, HABS No. CA-2311): \$7,459.33; "C" (Baker-Megrew Rowhouse, HABS No. CA-2312): \$8,197.08; "D" (Glenn and Ida May Moore Rowhouse): \$7,436.13. Source: "Completion Report, Civic Center Cottages, Rancho Santa Fe, April 12, 1927." Collection of Lundi Moore.

⁸⁶ Lilian J. Rice, "What Our Homes Should Mean to Us," Rancho Santa Fe News 2 no. 1 (April 1937): 3.

⁸⁷ Rice, "More Building in 1928," 14. Rancho Santa Fe was initially part of the Aliso School District, and teen-aged children attended high school in Escondido. The first elementary school in the village was planned as a modified U-shaped building, with two wings of four classrooms each flanking a two-story auditorium. (The plan and a preliminary sketch for this building are in the San Diego Historical Society - Ticor Collection.) Only the north wing of this design, comprising three classrooms and a washroom, was built on Block C in 1924. By the late 1920s over thirty-two children were in attendance. This space was outgrown by 1931, when a new school was designed by Rice and H. W. Whitsett. This building is now occupied by the Rancho Santa Fe Association; the original Rice/Whitsett plans are in the collection of the Association. For the early history of the Rancho Santa Fe schools, see Ruth R. Nelson, Rancho Santa Fe: Yesterday and Today, 17-18.

Sinnard's promotional effort--in 1927, Rancho Santa Fe's publicity program won a local advertising award--and in July 1927 began publication of a monthly magazine devoted to local news and reports on the growth of the community. First called *The Endless Miracle*, after McGroarty's brochure, the name was changed after the second issue to the *Rancho Santa Fe Progress*. It is not known if the change in management had any effect on sales, or growth, in Rancho Santa Fe.⁸⁸

The Civic Center's second generation of development began in early 1927, with the construction of a store and apartment building on the corner of Paseo Delicias and La Granada in Block D, built for F. W. Joers and Harold D. Ketchum, and designed by Lilian Rice (HABS No. CA-2308). Joers and Ketchum purchased the small grocery store that had been located in the office block, and moved it to the new location. When it opened on August 1, the store featured, in addition to groceries and produce, a small pharmacy and soda fountain.⁸⁹ Part of the building was given over to the local post office, and the second floor held a three-room rental apartment. Joers and Ketchum followed the establishment of the store with the construction of two other buildings on the adjoining lots: a rowhouse, with two small studio apartments built for rental purposes (HABS No. CA-2309); and a small structure with multiple functions, including a tea shop, a studio store, and an office for Ketchum (HABS No. CA-2316). Across the street from these structures, the Valenciana Apartment Building was completed in the spring of 1928. Built for George Christiancy, and also designed by Rice, the Valenciana housed three offices on the first floor (one was used by Rice), and three apartments on the second, reached by an exterior staircase at the inner corner of the L-shaped building. In front of the structure was a small landscaped patio that reached to the street corner, echoing the enclosed garden space across the street in the garage block.⁹⁰

Private developers such as Joers, Ketchum, and Christiancy thus fulfilled Sinnard's intention for the Civic Center, that it be a mixed-use residential and commercial center for Rancho Santa Fe. Indeed, individual buildings, such as the store or the Valenciana, that incorporated both commercial and residential spaces within a single structure represented in miniature this land-use scheme. The continuities between the first phase of building, initiated by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, and the second phase begun by Joers and Ketchum, were further strengthened by the use of Lilian Rice as architect for the new developments. Even within the original structures erected by the Land Improvement Company, moreover, changes occurred which symbolized the evolving character of the Civic Center. As previously stated, the store and post office, originally located in the Land Improvement Company office block, were moved to the Joers-Ketchum store building; in addition, the courtyard in back of the Administration building was purchased in early 1928 by Glenn Moore, and used to house his

⁸⁸ Sinnard's whereabouts after he left Rancho Santa Fe are a mystery. For the award given by the Pacific Advertising Clubs Association, see "Rancho Santa Fe Wins First Prize in Ad Competition," *Rancho Santa Fe Progress* 2 no. 1 (July 1928): 6.

⁸⁹ "Store in New Building," *The Endless Miracle* 1 no. 2 (August 1927): 4.

⁹⁰ Photographs of all the Joers/Ketchum structures were published in the *Architectural Record* 64 (October 1928): 317, 319, 321. Page 320 features a plan of the tea room building. Photographs and the plan of both floors of the Valenciana were published in Wright, "The Place of the Apartment in the Modern Community," and Seares, "The Village of Rancho Santa Fe."

landscaping business. Finally, the western half of the garage block was sold to Louise Badger (née Spurr), who, while retaining the service station, established a fountain lunch in the original "Accessories and Oils" building, and moved her residence from one of the Paseo Delicias rowhouses to the former "Tire Building."

Divestiture

The organization of the Rancho Santa Fe Country Club and Golf Course was another indication that residents and property owners themselves had become the major stimulus for new development. While the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company provided the financial backing for the construction of the golf course and clubhouse, all plans and decisions were made by a committee of private landowners.⁹¹ Similarly, an article in the November 1927 *Rancho Santa Fe Progress* noted that a committee of property owners was overseeing the matter of road improvement.⁹² By 1927, then, it seems clear that, because the pace of development had constantly improved each year, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company was preparing to divest itself of its interest in Rancho Santa Fe. Nevertheless, the Land Improvement Company, and especially its president, W. E. Hodges, still felt strongly that the kind of community Rancho Santa Fe had become still required the security of continued protection. The restrictions in the original Land Improvement Company deeds expired on January 1, 1933, ten years after development began. Thus, soon after Sinnard's departure, Hodges began talks with Charles H. Cheney, a nationally known city planner, about the possibilities of establishing permanent restrictions for the community.⁹³

Cheney had been trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and the University of California, and had worked extensively in planning and architecture throughout the state. In 1922, he had established a set of protective restrictions for Palos Verdes Estates, a planned community outside of Los Angeles. Cheney's protective covenant for Rancho Santa Fe was based on the document he had developed for Palos Verdes.⁹⁴ The covenant established the Rancho Santa Fe Association, a non-profit organization. Each property owner who signed the covenant was entitled to one vote in the Association, which was charged with maintaining the architectural, horticultural, and land-use restrictions established by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company

⁹¹ See, for example, "Rancho Santa Fe Country Club Formed; 18-Hole Golf Course is Aim," *Rancho Santa Fe Progress* 1 no. 4 (October 1927): 2.

⁹² "Road Committee is Busy," *Rancho Santa Fe Progress* 1 no. 5 (1927): 5. Over 40 miles of Rancho Santa Fe roads were eventually regraded, widened, and paved, beginning in August 1929. Financing was obtained under the Mattoon Act, which permitted the issuance of bonds (in this case, approximately \$400,000 worth) for rural road improvement.

⁹³ It may have been Sinnard who recommended Cheney. Sinnard, after all, was more familiar with planning trends than Hodges; furthermore, Cheney had worked at Atascadero, so Sinnard knew of his work first-hand. E. G. Lewis, *Palos Verdes, Los Angeles* (Atascadero: Atascadero Press, n.d.), 15.

⁹⁴ In fact, it was identical. Early drafts of the Rancho Santa Fe Protective Covenant are actually the Palos Verdes restrictions, with the name "Palos Verdes" crossed out on the documents, and "Rancho Santa Fe" written in its place. The author is indebted to Keith Behner, Senior Planner, Rancho Santa Fe Association, for supplying this information.

through a five-member board of directors. Architectural restrictions were to be supervised by the Art Jury, which was required to approve all building plans before construction began. The covenant also prescribed varying regulations for zoning, land use, building height, setbacks, property sales, architectural style,⁹⁵ and numerous other conditions. Each member of the Association was assessed an annual tax, in lieu of property tax, which was to pay for the Association's expenses. In return, Cheney wrote, "the Association will care for parking strips, trees and plantings along streets and sidewalks, accept and hold for common use parks, playgrounds, community houses, tennis courts or any other recreational features the members may determine upon; see that vacant lots are kept free from weeds and rubbish; arrange for the collection and disposal of garbage; arrange with County authorities for the upkeep of streets, fire and police protection; and otherwise co-operate with all authorities to assure the greatest common welfare of residents and owners in Rancho Santa Fe."⁹⁶ If voted on by a majority of the property owners, the restrictions would be in effect for a period of forty-five years, until 1973.

On August 1, 1927, the Rancho Santa Fe Association was incorporated under the laws of the state of California, signed by property owners Randal McDonald, A. H. Barlow, Briggs C. Keck, Barton Millard, and S. R. Nelson. The Rancho Santa Fe Protective Covenant was filed in the San Diego County Recorder's office on February 9, 1928.⁹⁷ Article V, Paragraph 183, Section 13 of the covenant stated that if 5,000 acres of land in Rancho Santa Fe had not been signed up by July 1, 1930, the covenant would "become null and void, and of no effect." By June 1928, sixty-four owners (including the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company) had signed 3,418.17 acres of land under the covenant.⁹⁸ Despite this promising start, many owners refused to sign, fearing that the restrictions would place undue hardships on their ability to develop or sell their land. Proponents of the covenant visited and wrote to many absentee owners, detailing its advantages and asking for support. Finally, just before the deadline, the requisite 5,000 acres had been signed, and the covenant was approved.⁹⁹

The concept of restrictions that would protect and control community growth was not new. As Cheney himself noted, "in preparing the protective covenant, the property owners committee has been guided by the experience of many years under similar schemes at Roland Park, in Baltimore; the famous Shaker Heights district, outside Cleveland; the Palos Verdes Estates in Los Angeles County; and the covenant recently worked out and now [1928] being

⁹⁵ "...that type of architecture which for several decades has been successfully developing in California, deriving its chief inspiration directly or indirectly from Latin types, which developed under similar climatic conditions along the Mediterranean or at points in California, such as Monterey." Rancho Santa Fe Protective Covenant, Article IV, Par. 157.

⁹⁶ Charles H. Cheney, "Guarding Beauty and Investment by Protective Restrictions," Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 7 (January 1928): 15.

⁹⁷ Book 1412, page 436. Two additional declarations of the Covenant were filed with the County, covering subdivisions Tract 2089 (filed April 17, 1928, book 1447, page 468) and Tract 2129 (recorded November 22, 1928). Information taken from the Rancho Santa Fe Protective Covenant.

⁹⁸ "Owners Sign Up on Covenant," Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 12 (June 1928): 7.

⁹⁹ Clotfelter, 33.

signed up for the Montecito district, near Santa Barbara."¹⁰⁰ In the 1920s, legally covenanted property was seen as a desirable quality that would appeal to wealthy investors, and would aid in the creation of an exclusive community; this was of course true for Rancho Santa Fe as well. Nevertheless, the official restrictions developed for Rancho Santa Fe were unique because they maintained conditions that had already been in effect; the enforcement of a planned community, begun with deed restrictions, was institutionalized in the protective covenant.¹⁰¹

After the process of placing Rancho Santa Fe under the protection of a covenant was underway, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company sold its remaining property to the Rancho Santa Fe Corporation, a syndicate of Los Angeles and Pasadena businessmen headed by Nels Gross. The Corporation retained S. R. Nelson as manager, and kept the deed restrictions established by the Land Improvement Company. The corporation also acquired an additional 1,400 acres of land in Solana Beach, intending to enlarge the boundaries of Rancho Santa Fe. Despite their ambitions, the Corporation was not successful. Financing was difficult, and Gross was not popular with the landowners. Most importantly, after the stock market crash in October 1929 real estate slumped severely, and, unable to sell land, the Corporation was forced to default on its loans. On January 23, 1931, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company regained title to acreage unsold by the Corporation; soon after, the company named A. R. Bishop sales manager of the property, based in Los Angeles.¹⁰² Reginald Clotfelter was appointed resident manager of Rancho Santa Fe.

DEPRESSION YEARS: 1930-1938

In addition to the difficulties of land sales during the Depression--indeed, many more land owners defaulted on their mortgages, or abandoned their land, unable to maintain tax payments, than bought new property¹⁰³--three serious problems plagued the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company after its reacquisition of land in Rancho Santa Fe. The Santa Fe Irrigation District was insolvent, behind on its payments to bondholders and unable to honor its contract with the City of San Diego to supply water to that municipality. The Rancho Santa Fe Country Club's golf course, completed in July 1929, was dependent on annual membership fees for repayment of a \$300,000 loan from the Land Improvement Company. When individual members could not afford their dues, the golf course, too, became insolvent. Finally, Rancho Santa Fe defaulted on its Mattoon Act bonds--which had financed the paving of more than forty miles of roads in the community--because of a provision in the act which forced other property owners to assume the debt of bondholders who could not pay their assessments. Because of this condition, land in

¹⁰⁰ Cheney, 7.

¹⁰¹ Keith Behner, "Rancho Santa Fe: The Historic Development of a Planned Community" (memorandum for the Rancho Santa Fe Association, February 14, 1991), 1.

¹⁰² "Memorandum on Rancho Santa Fe," 9. This document dates the sale to October 1, 1928.

¹⁰³ Reginald M. Clotfelter interview with Lauren Farber, July 1, 1991. Proof of this fact can also be seen in the Santa Fe Irrigation District Assessment books for the period.

Rancho Santa Fe was unattractive to buyers; in Clotfelter's words, the situation was "a blight--no one wanted to buy property under the Mattoon Act."¹⁰⁴

Over the course of the decade, each problem slowly found a solution. Thanks to the intervention of Col. Ed Fletcher, the Irrigation District was refinanced under the New Deal's Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The RFC underwrote a new bond issue, which bought up the defunct bonds at 40 cents on the dollar; interest was reduced from 6 to 4 percent, and repayment extended to a period of forty years. After the refinancing agreement, the City of San Diego agreed to rewrite its contract with the Irrigation District.¹⁰⁵ The golf course was saved through the facilitation of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. In exchange for the cancellation of its debt, the Rancho Santa Fe Country Club agreed to turn over the deed to the golf course to the Rancho Santa Fe Association. Although the Association thus received the golf course debt-free, the Land Improvement Company agreed to subsidize the course until it could be fully supported by assessments levied by the Association. (By the 1950s, the annual profit accrued by the golf course was sufficient to cover almost all of the financial needs of the Association.¹⁰⁶) The advantage for the Land Improvement Company was twofold: the Country Club's debt was worthless in any case, and a resolution of the problem would make the properties the Company held along the golf course--subdivisions 2089 and 2129--more attractive to prospective buyers.

The problem of the Mattoon Act bonds was not as easily solved. Over 10 percent of the assessed valuation of San Diego County was in or near default because of the bonds; "to facilitate a settlement, an informal tax strike was in effect for two years."¹⁰⁷ San Diego officials prevailed upon the state legislature to allow the county to issue \$3 million in bonds, which would buy up the now-worthless \$15 million Mattoon Act issue, paid out on a sliding scale of from 15 to 50 cents per dollar. In Rancho Santa Fe, the primary bondholder, Bank America, fought for a higher rate of 90 cents. In order to end the ordeal, Rancho Santa Fe taxpayers agreed to pay 40 cents in back taxes, along with 50 cents from the bond issue, to settle the community's obligations. In all, \$204,000 in delinquent and current taxes were paid in Rancho Santa Fe to retire the Mattoon Act bonds.¹⁰⁸

In January 1937, a bond-burning ceremony was held in front of La Morada to celebrate the end of the Mattoon Act "blight." The next month, a local newspaper reported that six properties had already been sold in Rancho Santa Fe by the Santa Fe Land Improvement

¹⁰⁴ Clotfelter interview.

¹⁰⁵ Clotfelter, 42; Fletcher, Memories, 259-262.

¹⁰⁶ Clotfelter, 42; Ruth R. Nelson, Rancho Santa Fe: Yesterday and Today, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Clotfelter, 42.

¹⁰⁸ Clotfelter, 42; Charles R. Nelson, "Early Years in San Diego and Rancho Santa Fe," 26; Clotfelter interview.

Company.¹⁰⁹ Although land sales after 1937 again brought prosperity to the community, one sale made earlier in the decade signaled that Rancho Santa Fe still retained its reputation as an elite, private haven for the well-to-do. In 1932, Bing Crosby and his family purchased over fifty acres of land, including one of the old Osuna adobe haciendas. As had been the case after the Fairbanks/Pickford purchase in 1926, Crosby's property in Rancho Santa Fe brought a great deal of publicity for the community.¹¹⁰ Most importantly, the establishment of the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Tournament at the Rancho Santa Fe golf course, and his support of the racetrack in neighboring Del Mar, both begun in 1937, brought Rancho Santa Fe to the attention of thousands of prospective investors.

RANCHO SANTA FE: 1948

Rancho Santa Fe today is a tribute to its far-sighted developers and its active community association. This pleasant community of about 700 residents, its streets free from blatant commercialism, and harmonizing completely with its surroundings, presents a picture of gracious, comfortable living . . . truly Southern California at its best.¹¹¹

By 1948, Rancho Santa Fe had changed again. The Santa Fe Land Improvement Company had finally divested itself of its holdings in Rancho Santa Fe, selling its remaining properties to John F. Sinclair of Los Angeles in 1945. (In 1947, Jones-Howard Company of Los Angeles acquired Sinclair's interest.¹¹²) Again, the Land Improvement Company's divestiture had been signaled by the sale of a Company Civic Center property--in this instance, La Morada--to a private investor, George Roslington, in 1940. Roslington's tenure was short-lived; he was soon bought out by George Richardson, who instituted a master plan for expansion for La Morada, which he renamed the Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. After the end of World War II, the Inn, like the rest of the community, began to prosper. New roads and improved driving conditions made it easier to commute from Rancho Santa Fe to work in San Diego or other neighboring cities. Increased national prosperity and a rise in the birth rate also aided Rancho Santa Fe's fortunes. Many young couples were attracted to the community as a safe and private place in which they could raise their families. By 1948, almost half the property owners resided full-time in Rancho Santa Fe, compared with only one-quarter in 1931 (fig. 3).

The Civic Center reflected the new Rancho Santa Fe. All of the original Santa Fe Land Improvement Company buildings were privately owned in 1948, and all housed services now

¹⁰⁹ "Sale of Historic Rancho Marks Activity as Malloon Act Lifts," February 21, 1937. Clipping on file, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

¹¹⁰ See Bing Crosby, "our Little Ranch in the West," California Arts and Architecture 48 (October 1935): 24-25; Martha B. Darbyshire, "Rancho Santa Fe Ranch House: The Bing Crosby's at Home in Their California Hacienda," Arts and Decoration 43 (December 1935): 17-19; Gene Steck, "Many Notables Own Dwellings in 110-Home Rural Community," San Diego Union October 30, 1938.

¹¹¹ "Rancho Santa Fe - A Study in Gracious California Living," 7.

¹¹² Ruth R. Nelson, Rancho Santa Fe: Yesterday and Today, 21.

essential to the community--a large market (former Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Headquarters Building), stores, offices, and restaurants (Administration Building and adjoining courtyard, now largely infilled¹¹³), and real estate offices (Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Office Building). Further development occurred on Block C, originally reserved for the elementary school. In 1945, Reginald Clotfelter built an office in the center of the block for his real estate business; by the 1950s, a bank and clothing store were also located there. In addition to new construction, most of the original Lilian Rice structures in the Civic Center were modified and adapted to new commercial uses. The large courtyard of the garage quadrangle, for instance, was slowly infilled with structures used for stores and offices. The garage itself was transformed into a Studebaker dealership in 1939, as new, larger gas stations were built in the community.¹¹⁴

CONCLUSION

In 1991, the trends exhibited in 1948 have persisted. The majority of property owners reside within the boundaries of Rancho Santa Fe. The Protective Covenant, renewed in 1973, continues to oversee and restrict development within the community. Today, the authority vested in the Rancho Santa Fe Association is considerable. To quote from a recent Association memorandum:

The Association raises revenue through assessments, adopts and oversees an annual budget, manages, acquires, sells and maintains real property, maintains and operates parks, trails and recreational facilities, adopts and enforces zoning and building regulations, operates a 24-hour armed security patrol, and maintains relations with surrounding local, regional and state entities.

The Association is governed by an elected Board of Directors which is headed by a Board president. There is an appointed Art Jury, an Association manager and his staff, a Covenant administrator who heads the planning department, a controller who heads the finance and accounting department, and a building commissioner.

The Association was brought into being and is still largely defined by the contractual relationship which the Protective Covenant and the Articles of Incorporation create between property owners and the Association. Non-profit corporate law and contractual law define the parameters of Covenant governance and empowers the Association with the ability and authority to control and regulate development, community character and aesthetic considerations.¹¹⁵

Based on the conditions outlined by Sinnard in 1921, the development of Rancho Santa Fe has been extremely successful. An elite "community equal in wealth, ambition and productive power to any of the most advanced suburban developments in Southern California" exists today within the boundaries of the former Rancho San Dieguito. A great deal of the credit for this

¹¹³ See the photograph published in Clotfelter, 68.

¹¹⁴ Charles R. Nelson telephone interview with Lauren Farber, July 24, 1991. See also Clotfelter, 83.

¹¹⁵ Behner, "Rancho Santa Fe: The Historic Development of a Planned Community," 2.

achievement must be given to the Protective Covenant, which has achieved its goal of "preserving, continuing, and maintaining this [unusually attractive and valuable] character of [the] community,"¹¹⁶ and to the regulatory oversight provided by the Association and Art Jury.

Such success has, however, not been unequivocal, for the very prosperity of the community has frequently posed a threat to its architectural integrity. Despite the Covenant's requirement (surely suggested by Lilian Rice) that "the design of the building must be such as will, in the opinion of the Art Jury, be reasonably appropriate to its site and harmonize with its surroundings,"¹¹⁷ the investment of larger and larger sums of money into Rancho Santa Fe property has increased pressures to build large and often incongruous structures in the community. And, as noted above, the Rice buildings in the Civic Center, as well as the original Requa/Jackson site plan for that area, have been severely modified in order to maximize available commercial and retail space.

Several recent developments have offered some restraint on development impulses in the community. The Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society was founded in 1985, dedicated to preserving the history and architectural character of the community. In 1990, the Rancho Santa Fe Association adopted the "Village Commercial District Architectural Design Guidelines," which regulate development and require adherence to Rice-inspired Spanish Revival style architecture. That same year, a sensitive restoration of the original Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Headquarters Building was made, to its pre-1938 fabric, based on these guidelines. Finally, in 1991, guidelines regulating the design of residential structures in the community were also adopted by the Association. These developments offer hope that the architectural and historical integrity of Rancho Santa Fe will be maintained as successfully as the goals of its original planners and investors were achieved.

¹¹⁶ Rancho Santa Fe Protective Covenant, preamble.

¹¹⁷ Rancho Santa Fe Protective Covenant, Article IV, Par. 155 (c). Gebhard and Winter, Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California, 494, also note this development.

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PROJECT INFORMATION

The Rancho Santa Fe project was undertaken during the summer of 1991 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society, Inc., the Rancho Santa Fe Association, and the Office of Historic Preservation of the State of California. Principals involved were Robert J. Kapsch, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), and Paul Dolinsky, project leader and chief of HABS. The documentation was completed at the Rancho Santa Fe field office by Professor John P. White (Texas Tech University), project supervisor; architectural technicians Sheri L. Bonstelle (Columbia University), Juan Tampe (Catholic University of America), Piotr Trebacz (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland, through US/ICOMOS), and E. Matthew Walter (University of Hawaii at Manoa); and architectural historian Lauren Farber (University of Delaware), Sally Kress Tompkins Fellow.